

PRESS RELEASE

SAUDI ARABIA SIGNS INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT 2022

20 February 2024, London, United Kingdom – The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made history today, signing the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) 2022 at the International Coffee Organization (ICO) headquarters in London. This is the first time the country has formally joined the ICO world coffee family, whose history spans 60 years.

Attending the ceremony were representatives from the Saudi Embassy in London and HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom, who signed the trade treaty. Under the ICA 2022, governments, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society, will come together to determine initiatives that support a more prosperous and sustainable future for stakeholders within the global coffee value chain.

Coffee is deeply woven into the fabric of life in Saudi Arabia. Historically, it was cultivated by the ancient tribes of Khawlan who lend their name to the prized Khawlani coffee typical of the Jazan region, the cultivation practices of which are inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As for consumption, the country's habits represent a blend of modernity and tradition, where the buzz of state-of-the-art espresso machines in Riyadh's coffee outlets intertwines with the comforting echoes of ancestral practices in homes across the nation. Saudis embrace both international coffee trends and authentic *qahwa*, often flavoured with cardamom and poured into small ornate cups called *finjan*. For many, the serving of the beverage is a distinctive cultural ritual and a symbol of the Kingdom's rich history and hospitality.

ICO Executive Director Vanúsia Nogueira said:

"We are honoured to welcome Saudi Arabia as a signatory to the ICA 2022 and hope that this will bring a unique new flavour to our global community. Together in the spirit of international cooperation, we celebrate the diversity of coffee traditions and jointly undertake to safeguard, promote, and sustain the sector. I am sure that our collaboration will thrive as we foster a future where we continue to savour the richness of coffee while advocating for all aspects of sustainability".

On signing the Agreement, HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud commented:

“This is a remarkable day for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as we join the International Coffee Organization. For years, people of Saudi Arabia enjoyed the delights of traditional Arabic coffee, which has a 600 years history and is still regarded as a hallmark of Arabian hospitality today, and is inextricably linked to traditional identity.

The coffee sector in Saudi Arabia is growing fast and is an important part of our plans for the future and the change we wish to bring to our country as it contributes to diversifying the national economy. Public Investment Fund (PIF) launched the Saudi Coffee Company in May 2022, which is investing 319\$ million over the next ten years to support the growth of the national coffee industry, with the goal of boosting the country’s production from 300 tons per year to 2500 tons per year, and focusing on achieving sustainability, across the production, distribution and marketing aspects of the coffee supply chain.

We see ICO, and this updated agreement, as a key to achieving our hopes and ambitions for the coffee industry locally and globally, and we look forward to working with colleagues at ICO to secure a positive and thriving future for coffee in the years and decades to come.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

International Coffee Organization

The International Coffee Organization (ICO) is the only intergovernmental organization supporting exporting and importing countries to improve the sustainability of the coffee sector. It provides a high-level forum for all public and private stakeholders in the sector; official statistics on coffee production, trade and consumption; and support for the development and funding of technical cooperation projects and public-private partnerships.

ICA 2022

The ICA 2022 is the eighth approved agreement since the establishment of the ICO, engaging exporting and importing governments, as well as the private sector and civil society. Introducing key improvements to streamline the ICO's institutional and financial frameworks, it focuses on the sustainability of the coffee sector, the resilience and livelihood of coffee farmers and their right to a living and prosperous income. While the intergovernmental nature seen under previous agreements remains unchanged, the 2022 Agreement also officially integrates private sector and civil society participation, enabling coffee public and private decision-makers, stakeholders, and farmers to align their views and decide on joint actions to achieve a more sustainable and prosperous sector. Including Saudi Arabia, 18 countries have already signed the ICA 2022. Three of these have also completed the required procedures for its entry into force, which will take place when signatory governments holding at least two-thirds of the votes of the importing and exporting Members have deposited instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval.

HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom

Born in Paris, in 1977, HRH Prince Khalid bin Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz graduated from Oxford University with a BA in the Oriental Studies degree in Islamic Civilization and attended Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He attended Sandhurst Military Academy and graduated as a commissioned officer. Later he worked at the United Nations department of Political Affairs in New York and then as an advisor to the Saudi Ambassador to the United States. In 2006, he established Dayim Holdings as an investment and operating platform to create local and international companies in the Kingdom and Gulf states. In 2017, he became the Saudi Ambassador to Germany. In 2019, he was made the Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom.